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SUBJECT: GREEK FOREIGN MINISTER BRIEFS AMBASSADOR RICE ON
OSCE, GREECE-MACEDONIA NEGOTIATIONS, AND CYPRUS ISSUES

REF: MOSCOW 212

Classified By: Ambassador Susan Rice for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. SUMMARY. (C) Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis told Ambassador Rice and Ambassador Wolff on February 26, that her current priorities as Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE were to find a consensus approach for engaging on Russia's proposals for a new European security architecture and to get OSCE consensus for a continued presence in Georgia. Bakoyannis observed that most OSCE members did not want to revisit current security arrangements, but were also keen to engage with Russia on their proposals. She sought U.S. assistance to encourage Georgia to be more flexible in discussions about OSCE's presence in Georgia. On Greece's UN priorities, Bakoyannis said she could live with the name "North Macedonia" or an alternative geographic adjective to describe Macedonia, but she expressed frustration at what she characterized as Macedonian Prime Minister Gruevski's unwillingness to respond to a major Greek concession to allow the official name to contain the word, Macedonia, at all. On the Cyprus negotiations, Bakoyannis said Cyprus President Christofias is "absolutely determined" to find an agreement. She added that Turkish Foreign Minister Babacan had told her he wants an agreement, but she wondered whether the Turkish army "would be willing to take their 35,000 troops out of Cyprus". END SUMMARY.

EUROPEAN SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

12. (C) Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis, who came to New York to brief the Security Council on her activities as Chairwoman-in-Office (CiO) of the OSCE, outlined for Ambassadors Rice and Wolff her priorities in the OSCE. Bakoyannis gave a brief overview of her just completed meetings in Washington, which had included a discussion of Russian proposals for a new European security architecture. Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov had told her during a recent meeting in Moscow that he would like to discuss proposals at the annual Security Review Conference, but he wanted to elevate the discussion to the ministerial level. Bakoyannis was willing to facilitate discussions as CiO, she said, that would combine the Russian proposals with "our point of view on hard and soft security issues". However, she thought most OSCE colleagues were not eager to change current security agreements, though many were keen to engage Russia in a security dialogue.

GEORGIA

13. (C) Bakoyannis said her priority as OSCE CiO was to get agreement on retaining an OSCE Mission in Georgia/South Ossetia. She thought the only way to bridge differences with

Russia over the OSCE structure (i.e., one mission or two separate missions) and activities (i.e., whether there would be a military monitoring role in South Ossetia) of the mission, would be to "agree that we do not agree" with Russia on recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and on that basis to find technical wording for the mission structure and activities that would depoliticize the issue and allow us to proceed. The Foreign Minister said she would be visiting Tbilisi in early March to discuss Greek proposals with President Sakaashvili, but she feared that the Georgians would not be flexible. She believed the EU would not step in if the OSCE mission closed, and that the OSCE played an important role in Georgia beyond military monitoring, including monitoring reforms and human rights. Bakoyannis hoped the U.S. could weigh in with Georgia to urge them to remain flexible.

MACEDONIA

14. (C) Turning to Greece's dispute with Macedonia over the country's name, Bakoyannis said the Greek parliament had made a major concession in 2008 when it changed its previous position and decided to allow the word, "Macedonia", to appear as part of the official name. The Foreign Minister emphasized that the main Greek concern was that it should be clear from the name that the country did not encompass the entire geographic region of historical Macedonia. The name, she said, needed to contain a geographic adjective, such as "north" or "northern", to make it clear that the Macedonians do not aspire to a greater Macedonia. Referring to recent

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proposals by UN Special Envoy Matthew Nimetz, Bakoyannis said Greece was not excited by the proposal, "North Macedonia", but "we can live with it." Greece wants to develop good neighborly relations with Macedonia, she said, adding that Greece was its biggest investor and was supporting visa liberalization for Macedonians, and had set aside 50 million Euros for the "Corridor Ten" highway leading from Central Europe through Serbia and Macedonia to Greece.

15. (C) She expressed frustration that there had not been a positive reaction from Macedonian Prime Minister Gruevski to the Greek concession on the name. Gruevski, she said, was trying to project Macedonia's problems onto Greece in advance of elections, and had also deliberately taken provocative actions-- such as naming the Macedonia part of the "Corridor Ten" highway after Alexander the Great-- to bolster his nationalist credentials. Bakoyannis said Greece had found that move "offensive", and she had no choice but to withhold the money that had been set aside for the project. Bakoyannis said she was still holding onto the money, however, "hoping that logic will prevail." She believed similar "provocative acts" from Macedonia would continue through the March 2009 presidential and local elections, and said she would "wait until after the elections", and then she hoped the U.S. would "tell them they must agree" to the Nimetz proposals. Bakoyannis drew a firm redline on the possibility of additional Greek concessions, saying, "I don't think any--any Greek parliament could go further than what we did." Ambassador Rice said she completely understood the sensitivity of the issue, but stressed that it is time to look to the future-- not to lose the history but to get beyond it.

CYPRUS

16. (C) On Cyprus, Foreign Minister Bakoyannis said Cyprus President Christofias was "absolutely determined" to find an agreement with Turkish Cypriot leader Talat, and she thought that if there were ever two leaders to negotiate a solution it would be Christofias and Talat. She thought some progress

had been made so far in the negotiations, but not as much as she would have liked. Bakoyannis believed the question of "security guarantees" was anachronistic, that European countries did not need them, so if the two leaders were able to reach a negotiated settlement on other matters, the security issues would follow. Bakoyannis thought that there was much more work to be done in the negotiations before the two leaders would be ready to address the security guarantees. She emphasized that it would be important for a unified Cyprus to be a viable state that could be governed "using EU logic," where people are communicating and working together under a common identity. The Turkish Cypriots appeared to her to want a confederation of two completely different states with one person as a titular leader, which would make it impossible for Cyprus to function as a member of the EU. Bakoyannis said Turkish Foreign Minister Babacan had told her Turkey wants to resolve the Cyprus question, but she wondered whether the Turkish military was ready "to take 35,000 troops out of Cyprus." Ambassador Rice emphasized that there was a real window of opportunity to come to a resolution and it was important to seize it.

Rice